

# THE REFORMER.

Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth.—*Jeremiah*, v. 1.

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## NATIONAL RELIGION.

[From a *Troy (N.Y.) paper* of Dec. 24.]

Our attention for some months past, has been occasionally called to the consideration of the efforts that have been made, and are making, by an aspiring set of men of the clerical order, to monopolize to themselves the sole prerogative in religious privileges, and by gradual steps, approximate towards the establishment of a *National Religion*.—But we took little or no alarm at the accounts received of these movements, conceiving them to originate in a too jealous spirit of liberal minded Christians, who ever are, and ever should be, jealous of their liberties. But we confess that we have too long neglected to pay that attention to the subject that it justly merits, and that a free people have *reason* to be extremely jealous of the encroachments that are making on their rights. We can no longer be silent. And it well becomes every free born American citizen to open his eyes on the movements that are making, and the *signs of the times* that are to be seen through the artfully woven veil with which they are attempted to be concealed. Such designs on the religious liberties of our people as exist, must, in order to succeed, be concealed under some very *plausible pretext*, and with some very *specious titles*—and such pretexts and such titles are adopted. The *pretext* is, to *convert* the heathen and *evangelize* and *save* the world; and the *titles* are, “Missionary Societies, Tract Societies, Education Societies, Bible Societies, Meliorating Societies, Insurance Companies,” &c. &c. Some of our readers may stare and be surprised at the mention of these societies,

thinking that nothing bad can be apprehended from societies with such respectable names as the above. We confess the names are good; and were the *motives* that actuate these societies as good as the names, we should apprehend no danger; but would heartily co-operate with them in the glorious undertaking of converting and evangelizing the world. No one would more heartily rejoice in the promulgation of the pure doctrine of Christ in the world, than ourselves. But facts relative to the conduct of most of these societies, speak for themselves, and prove that their principal object is *monopoly, personal aggrandizement, private emolument*, the up-building of a *particular sect*, and eventually, the establishment of a *national creed and national religion*. To compass this, every exertion is made, and every nerve is strained by an avaricious and aspiring clergy of the Presbyterian order, and the *lay tools* they make use of. *Money! Money!* *Money!* is the cry: and this is the *mainspring* of their zealous efforts, and one principal object of their pursuit. To prove this we shall state some facts which we wish every friend of religious freedom to consider seriously; for facts are “*stubborn things*” which we cannot easily away with.

We learn by a late number of the *New York Observer*, an orthodox paper, devoted principally to the cause of Missionary and Tract Societies, that a handsome *premium* is offered for the *best written Tract*, to induce people to give *large sums of money by will, bequest, or other donations*, for the benefit of Missionary and Tract Societies!—Thus we see large sums of money are offered to obtain still larger sums to

gratify avarice and support a *particular order*.

During the last session of the legislature of this state, the clergy got up no less than *thirty-three* petitions, to prevent travelling and canal boat navigation on Sunday; and although this effort failed of success, yet we are informed they are not discouraged, but mean to make, at the next session, a desperate effort to have the tolls of the canal boats thus (as they esteem them) sacrilegiously obtained on Sunday, appropriated to the benefit of Missionary and Tract Societies. But heaven grant that they may also fail in this undertaking; for the Tracts that they are so industriously spreading contain almost any thing, and every thing but common sense and christian sentiments. If this unhallowed effort they propose to make to get the tolls into their own hands, is not a proof that they, like Balaam, *love the reward of iniquity*, we know not what would amount to a proof.

During the last year, influenced by this aspiring set of sectaries, Secretary Yates issued a *papal bull* for the introduction of *tracts* into common schools. And though the project met the decided disapprobation of the legislature, its friends are careful not to publish it to the world, thinking they shall succeed by and bye.

Last spring, to render their name and proceedings still more imposing, the friends of Tract Societies met in New York and formed what they call a *National Tract Society!* thus beginning to have *national* establishments of a *particular sect*. But perhaps some will say, "it is not of a particular sect; for it is composed of Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Baptists and Methodists." It is true, it purports so to be; but the truth of it is, *Presbyterians*, and *they alone, are at the bottom of it*, and will have the management of it; and the other denominations are only taken in to give it an imposing and popular aspect. Of this the Methodists are al-

ready fully satisfied, and have expressed their disapprobation decidedly, by declaring that "such an institution, or any other of a similar nature, is rather fraught with danger to the religious communities of this country, in which any advance towards an establishment of a **NATIONAL** character, professedly connected with religion, ought to be promptly and decidedly discountenanced." The Baptists also are beginning to see through the plot, and become jealous of their safety in this establishment; and we believe the Episcopalians will not long remain ignorant of their danger, in this connexion. To show that it is designed only to benefit and build up a *particular sect or party*, we need only recur to the observations made at the time of the establishment of this institution, by some of its leading founders. Mr. Malcome, of Hudson, stated on the occasion, that he considered "Tracts pioneers to the Bible;" and observed that "the Bible itself would be useless unless Tracts were also sent, giving clear outlines of some *systematic system* of doctrines;" by which he undoubtedly meant the **FIVE POINTS** of Calvin. "He further declared," says the Christian Inquirer, "that Sunday Schools would be useless, and that it would be *dangerous* to teach children to read, unless they were furnished with, and taught to read *tracts*!" Such, reader, you see is the object of these tracts, to teach children *Calvinism* instead of *Bibleism*!

This high-handed imposition is carried on in every part of our country, but more systematically and zealously in this state and New Jersey than any other. To accomplish the designs of its abettors, every engine is put in motion; and to increase their funds, every beggarly artifice is resorted to, that is calculated to disgrace our name and our nation. Missionary boxes are stationed in every tavern and boarding house, steam, and packet boat, where they will permit them; and instead of contributing to the relief of the poor,

the widow, and fatherless, these lawless beggars will drain from them the very *last mite* to fill their coffers and accomplish their Jesuitical plans.

To aid these artful designs an *American Fire Insurance Company* has lately been formed in New York, the surplus funds and avails of which are to be devoted to these *national* establishments. This *religious* Insurance Company, for such it may be called, is designed for the benefit of a *party*, though it nominally embraces those denominations included in the *National Tract Society*; but Presbyterians, and they only, rule in this case as in that. And it is notorious that **THIS SECT bear rule** in all these great *national* and other establishments of a religious nature, and have the management of the *funds* to dispose of at their option.

We should be glad to except the American Bible Society from the censure due to these other national establishments,—but we are constrained to view it as a part of the great engine in the hands of the self-styled orthodox, for promoting their avaricious and party views, and for monopolizing every thing sacred to themselves. In short, though the *names* of these societies are *specious*, and though some good has been, and may be done by them, yet we are constrained to believe that all these Missionary, Tract, Bible, Education, Jews, and Sunday School Societies, Religious Insurance Companies, &c. are *parts of one great system of fraud and imposition*, designed to raise large sums of money to be hoarded up and employed for the benefit of a *party*, which has done much, and designs more evil, by destroying the religious freedom of our country, robbing the poor and needy of their necessary bread, chaining the rising generation down in ignorance, under the oppressive yoke of an unrelenting oligarchy, and all this without accomplishing *one* of their professedly benevolent purposes of “saving the heathen, evangelizing the world,” &c. We have seen

their overt acts of wickedness, as well as their secret frauds and machinations. They are boldly demanding 700,000 ministers of the orthodox stamp, and money enough to educate them, ship them off, and support them with large salaries while they visit the heathen to distribute Calvinistic *tracts*, and live in pomp and splendour.

Of these things we are jealous, and we think justly so. Reader, should you be surprised if we were to tell you the day is not distant when attempts will be made to force upon us a **NATIONAL CREED**, authorized by government, and enforced and supported by the secular arm? Perhaps you will say, “there is no danger of this under our republican form of government, and our excellent system of laws.” But stop, reader! Look! The attempt is already made, and making with all diligence! An infamous *circular*, urging the importance of this, has already been sent out and circulated through this state and Ohio; and though there is no name to it, by which it can be ascertained by whom it was written, it bears the leading features and characteristics of a *Presbyterian* production; and is undoubtedly designed to feel the public pulse on the subject of a *national religion*. Forsooth it proposes a “gradual union and amalgamation of all denominations and religious parties, and to establish a *national creed*.”

Thus, reader, you see the *mystery of iniquity* fully revealed. We are to have a *national religion*, if this plot succeeds, forced upon us by the power of the secular arm; to bring about which, these great national engines are set in motion; begging is systematically carried on; and vast quantities of “silver and gold and precious stone,” are hoarded and hoarding up, “against the day of wrath.” And what will not *money* do? It will effect almost any thing, only get enough of it together. They will make *merchandise* of you, and *buy and sell men's souls* for paltry pieces of silver. If these deep-laid and

subtle plans are not disconcerted—if these aspiring Pharisees succeed in their designs—if they thus proceed step by step (for it is by gradual moves they calculate to gain their purpose) till they compass their ends—we shall soon have to bid farewell to American freedom,—farewell to *religious liberty* forever! We may look forward to the time when no man will be permitted to *buy or sell*, or hold any civil or religious office of emolument, unless he has the *mark of the beast* in his hand or in his forehead, and can distinctly pronounce the Shibboleth of orthodoxy. Yea, we may expect to see all the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition or the British Star Chamber, in dungeons, racks, and halters. But heaven avert the fatal blow from our hitherto favoured land! Open the eyes of this people that they may see what they are about.

Perhaps some may think these forebodings are untimely and without just foundation or cause. We wish they might prove to be so, or at least that they were unnecessary: but we are too well acquainted with the history of *man* in past ages, to be ignorant of what *man* would be again, only give him the power. We therefore call on every free born son of America, and every liberal minded Christian, to whatever denomination he may belong, to set his face steadfastly against an approximation to any establishment of a national character in religious matters.

[From the New York Telescope.]

THE WAY TO ESTABLISH A NATIONAL RELIGION MADE PLAIN.

By the following article the reader will perceive that at a distance of more than one thousand miles from this city, ambitious and mercenary Priests are using every exertion to unite Church and State together, and thus overthrow our civil and religious liberty. Fellow citizens, if you do not take some measures to arrest the deep-laid plans of the Priesthood to effect this object, our children or the rising generation,

will have to groan under ecclesiastical bondage and tyranny.

*From the Charleston (S.C.) Intelligencer.\**

Union is necessary to the accomplishment of any great object. Christians are engaged in a great and glorious enterprize. They are all enlisted in the same cause. To whatever family, tribe, nation, or clime they belong, their object is one—the glory of God. An object worthy of christians. But how are they best to promote it? By individual and separate exertions, or by concentrating and uniting their efforts? Surely, by UNION. In what way then shall they unite? Upon the same principle that individuals unite in a single church. A church is one, and independent, just as each member was previous to its formation. The different churches, then, may be considered as so many individuals free and independent. To form a union, therefore, these churches must delegate a part of their rights to another society more general. These rights must be specified in the constitution of this society; as the rights, delegated by individual christians, are in the covenant of each church. Then every church possesses certain rights as an independent body, and some in common with those belonging to the more general society. This society† now becomes an independent body, possessing certain rights peculiar to itself. This may again unite with other similar societies, and thus form another still more general. And so on indefinitely, [until our government and the government of the whole world is controlled by religious men.]

For instance, there are christians in all parts of the world. These are, or ought to be, formed into distinct churches. These churches may, and it is undoubtedly expedient they should, be formed into more general societies.

Thus let the different churches in

\* Presbyterian or Congregational publication.—[Ed. Reformer.]

† To be called by any name you please.

each State form themselves into one general society. Then, let these state societies in every nation be formed into one still more general. And then, let these *national societies* be formed into one grand society, that shall embrace the whole world. This society would be “an army with banners.” It would look down the opposition of earth and hell.

Here the exertions of every christian on earth would be concentrated, and brought to bear on the same great object. And every christian, however obscure, would possess certain rights, as an individual—as a member of the church—the *state society*—the *national society*—and the society of the world. These rights are entirely distinct and separate. To explain and apply them is what the civilian would call the science of jurisprudence—but I shall call it Christian *prudence*.

This view of the church may be considered a fiction of the imagination; so would a *National Bible Society* have been thirty years ago; but now it is a reality—so this *may be* at some future period.

#### *For the Reformer.*

If in these days we were to judge of the motives of most religious pretenders, by the zeal they manifest to convert the heathen, and in frequenting places of worship, we should suppose them to be governed by a divine influence. It would be hard, however, to make the writer believe that those numerous plans emanating from this zeal, and the pomp and show displayed in what is called religious worship, and which cannot be kept up without a plentiful supply of dollars and cents, is the religion of Jesus Christ. Its carnal or spiritual character is best illustrated and defined by the temporal reward which is required for its existence and support. When all the emoluments, honours, and pleasures of the world accompany it, and are enlisted in its favour, he must be endued with

an uncommon degree of charity who can see nothing carnal or selfish in it. The sincerity of a man’s zeal in any cause is to be more or less estimated by the kind of interest which he feels for its promotion. All the ejaculations which the art and ingenuity of modern preachers can call forth by a study of the most flowery and finished orators and writers, to work on the vile passions of man, for mercenary purposes, may be ascribed to any other motives than those of Christianity. Any one who seriously reads the scriptures, will believe that the studied eloquence, and the vociferations of the clergy of the present day, were unknown and avoided by Paul and the apostles as mockery and wickedness. While Paul was soberly engaged in “reasoning out of the scriptures,” or speaking “in demonstration of the spirit and of power,” we cannot suppose he was labouring to make his auditors admire his eloquence, or to furnish liberal contributions of money. We might well question the divine origin of that religion which he was labouring day and night to preach and propagate, amid the scoffs and persecutions of his enemies, if he had claimed a temporal reward for it. His own conduct in this respect furnishes an illustrious example for imitation, and to prove that while pure and undefiled religion is preached freely and for nothing, that of the world cannot be without money and distinction.

But the *world will love its own*. A proud and accomplished hireling priest, adorned in the most fashionable attire of the times, who appears gratified with it, and is surrounded with a large well dressed and fashionable audience, assembled to hear and admire him, must be inspired with vanity. It cannot be otherwise when he sees and knows himself to be exalted to a greater state of distinction than most of his fellow men, in addition to the comforts and enjoyments which a lucrative employment gives him. Conscious pride

and pleasure must swell the breast of such a man, when he knows that the church bell, in attendance on him, has, by one or two long and loud ringings, notified his audience to prepare and adorn themselves to see him walk to church in style, with his rich sacerdotal robes, in obedience to its solemn chimes. Hence they witness an exhibition of all the attitudes and gestures of a theatrical performer, to do homage to what? Not the true God, but a god or idol which their pride and avarice have tempted and qualified them to serve—for any one must wofully confound external appearances with the secret language of the heart, to be at a loss to determine who and what that god is. It is difficult for men of judgment and sense to avoid treating such an exhibition of profane-ness and folly but with irony and contempt. And he who can believe it to be the solemn worship of God, in spirit and in truth, betrays a shameful ignorance of the scriptures.

There is so little private examination of the scriptures, that the great body of mankind, with respect to religion, are brought under bondage to a select and learned body of priests, who arrogate to themselves, for their own advantage, the whole right and power of instructing them in it. From the time of Constantine to the present day, it has been the study and business of this order of men to establish such dominion over the minds and consciences of their fellow men. Kings, potentates, and priests, have ever been ready to associate to secure and perpetuate this power and dominion. When secured in it, they are ever jealous and vigilant of any invasion of it. To form the strongest possible ligament to it, while by delusion they blind and deceive their votaries, they furnish every motive of pride and interest to passive obedience. Such an empire, established and strengthened by ages over the minds and consciences of men, is not easily to be overturned. All the pow-

er, riches, influence, and pride of the world, form an indissoluble tie for its continuance.

The same fear which kindled Herod's rage for the security of his power at the coming of Jesus, readily prompts and actuates the proud hierarchy of this day against those who are opposed to their dominion. The Scribes and Pharisees were more strict and zealous observers of the religious and moral law than the clergy of this day are, who as well deserve as they did to be ranked with hypocrites. The one, like the other, were ever ready to complain of every supposed violation of moral duty. When, to relieve hunger and distress, Christ's disciples plucked the ears of corn on the Sabbath day, they were the first to complain of the breach of it—like our clergy respecting the trans-  
portation of the mail and the passage of the canal boats. They were ready to call in question the propriety of his healing the sick on that day, and even to put him to death for what they called blasphemy. When they occupied Moses' seat in the synagogue, it seems too, like our clergy, they were exemplary in their injunctions of morality and duty; for our Saviour said, "whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do ye not after them, for they say and do not." The clergy are no more disposed in these days to submit to the plain doctrines and example of the son of a carpenter, than were the Scribes and Pharisees; but like them, are employed in teaching for doctrine the commandments of men, thereby to exalt themselves and increase their power and influence.

So indispensably necessary is the ac-  
quisition of money to enlarge the king-  
dom of the clergy, that without it  
their religion cannot be preached and  
propagated. By their arts and designs  
they have increased their ascendancy  
so much among a great portion of men,  
that the fear of being cast out of the  
synagogue and losing their standing in  
society, insures their interest to the

kingdom of antichrist. This is the prop to their power on earth.

As soon as the birth of Jesus was announced, the hostility of Herod commenced, followed by that of the Scribes and Pharisees; and it has been continued against his *kingdom* ever since, for the support of the honours and emoluments of a worldly one. They were then alarmed, as they are now, lest something should come in conflict with their power and interest. When money makes the moving cause of religion, all its adherents will be governed alike by its influence. It is not the power and love of truth which will convert such men from the error of their ways, for they are the enemies of it. The preaching and miracles of Jesus, in broad daylight, before the whole world, which spread his fame and excited the wonder of all people, instead of making converts and proselytes of the proud and ambitious rulers of the Jewish church, it only provoked their rage and hostility to destroy him. This was no other than the worldly spirit and temper which actuates the clergy of the present day; and every opposition to their ungodly courses will be sure to incur their vengeance and hatred. Though the Scribes and Pharisees could not deny the power and truth of the Saviour's miracles, and some expressed a willingness to become his disciples in consequence of them, yet a fear of the Roman arms, and the danger which their increasing fame might produce to the great idol of their hearts, *the praise and glory of men*, determined them in a settled opposition or enmity against him.

Zealous pretenders are never wanting in any, and especially a bad cause. Even Judas Iscariot made a pretence of regard and charity to the poor, as professors in this day do to the poor heathen—and expense for almost any thing else is looked upon as extravagant and wasteful. While, however, we see so many of the clergy incessantly engaged to attain great honours,

distinction, and riches in the world, we may conclude a love of it predominates with them as it did with Judas, and that they are of one fraternity.

A VIRGINIAN.

*For the Reformer.*

[Communicated from a correspondent in Windham county, Vermont.]

*Mr. Editor*—I have noticed in some of your papers, accounts of the conduct of young men preparing for the ministry, that would be dishonourable to those of the lowest rank in life, and that are well calculated to show what kind of piety some of these young men possess. An instance has occurred in the parish where I live, that I deem worthy of notice, and which may serve further to convince the public that all who are looking forward to the ministry are not very fit characters to occupy such a station.

About five or six years ago, there came a young student from the eastern part of the state of New York, and got in with the priest of our parish to study divinity. He then went to one of his deacons who lived near by, and agreed to pay him the cash for board. The deacon boarded him about eighteen weeks for the promise of one dollar per week. The young student appeared so pious and godly, and prayed and exhorted with so much fervency, that the whole church spoke highly of his piety. I heard the deacon's wife say that he was the most pious and godly man she ever saw, and that she durst not speak one unnecessary word, nor let a smile play on her lips in his presence, for fear of reproof from him.

After staying the above time with the deacon without paying him any thing, this young divine then went to another place not far off, and got in to board again for the promise of one dollar per week,—cash to be paid soon. At the same time he pretended much surprise that his friends had not turned some part of his property into cash and sent it on to him before, to enable

him to pay his contracts. He stayed at this new boarding place sixteen weeks, during which time he was very earnest in studying divinity, in prayer and exhortation, and preached some few lectures. By this time, I presume, he thought he was sufficiently qualified for a priest, and could get his living by preaching and lay up something besides.

While he stayed with us, he made such great displays of christian zeal and piety as gained him all the credit he needed, and as long as he needed it. Before he left us he went to a store and bought cloth suitable for a clerical suit, and then went to a tailor and got it made up—all on a short credit. He then cleared out to go and get his own money, and would be back soon and pay off all his debts—but has never since returned, nor paid one cent of all his contracts. We have heard from him two or three times since he went away, and were informed that he was going about like a roaring lion, preaching, praying, and exhorting at a great rate. How much good his prayers and preaching will do, any one can tell as well as the writer of this. A. G.

[It may be proper to state, that we never publish such statements as the foregoing, without some knowledge of the writer, and in the present instance we have the fullest confidence that nothing has been exaggerated. We think it would not have been improper had our correspondent given the name of the person, in order that the public might be on their guard against his future impositions.]

*[From the Christian Inquirer.]*

"There are few subjects of more interest, or which more generally agitates the world, than the opinions entertained by Christian professors, concerning the meaning of scripture testimony, respecting the practice and doctrine of Jesus Christ. This diversity of sentiment is confined to no class or sect; but all who believe they are convinced of the truth of Christianity, have in some degree entered into religious con-

troversy, to enforce the peculiar doctrine which their education and prejudice have impressed on their minds.

"The various defenders of Christian doctrine, are arrayed in powerful phalanx against each other. System after system is pulled down and destroyed, and others are erected on the ruins, which can only stand until they are more powerfully attacked, and in turn these are subverted. Thus all is agitation and uncertainty—nothing is found substantial, and the mind which is sincerely employed in the search after truth among these perishable materials, is embarrassed and confused, till it is ready to conclude that it does not exist—or if it exist at all, that it can only be found beyond the grave."

The foregoing presents a very melancholy picture; but it is too true, and it will continue to be realized until mankind cease to strive and contend about the lesser matters of religion, and attend, principally, to those which are weighty and important. Mere doctrines and opinions, however correct, will save no man. The heart must be made right, and the life and conduct must be in conformity with the example and precepts of Jesus Christ. Happy would it be for communities, and for society at large, if every individual was sincerely concerned and engaged to become truly right. This is what is now so much wanted in the world, and until people come to seek for it with sincerity, in vain is professing religion, going to meeting, or undertaking to promote the cause of Christianity.

It would be well indeed if there was an end of *professing* religion, preaching, going to meetings, building meeting-houses, and undertaking to convert the heathen, until those *denominated* Christians, could bring themselves to act justly, deal mercifully towards each other, and walk humbly before God. The sin of hypocrisy would then cease, and we might entertain a reasonable

and comfortable hope, that the reign of righteousness and peace would soon commence on the earth, and all nations come to the knowledge of God. But when professing Christians are so much occupied with vain and useless services in the name of religion, with creeds and doctrines, and fancy they are doing such great things to promote the interests of Christianity, while at the same time they neglect the most important duties of morality and righteousness, they only deceive themselves, and bring dishonour on the cause of Christ, as well as prevent its advancement, wherever their example and practices become known.

This corrupt state of things in Christendom must, indeed, at length come to an end; and when that period shall arrive, it will be as it was in the time of the Saviour.—At that time, those who were *first* in profession and an outward show of religion, were the *last* in regard to any thing truly right and acceptable in the sight of God—and the *last* to receive and obey the commands of the Gospel. Even publicans and harlots entered into the kingdom of God, and became obedient to its requirements, before the high professing Scribes and Pharisees.

Just so it will be again when the Lord comes to establish his kingdom of righteousness and truth in the earth, and to overthrow all the sectarian kingdoms, with their orders of priests, creeds, rules and disciplines, now so numerous and so degenerate throughout professing christendom. For these hindrances to true and genuine religion must all be destroyed before righteousness and peace can flourish and prevail amongst men. In each and every sect there are now more or less of the works and inventions of men, with bigotry, party spirit, and a want of that true virtue and integrity necessary to their preservation and perpetuity. And a little acquaintance with past history will convince us that no religious sectarian community, when once corrupt-

ed, has ever experienced a radical reform; nor will such an event ever be likely to take place. The reason is obvious. Corrupt, ambitious, and interested men, after a time, get to be officers and rulers in all these societies, and can maintain their ascendancy and authority, and they will oppose and withstand every thing calculated to make them better or reform their practices. And when the time comes that they shall no longer shut the kingdom of heaven against men, and their corrupt conduct and arbitrary proceedings are exposed and witnessed against in order to their thorough correction and removal, these lovers of pre-eminence and rulers in the church, with their partisans, will come forth with all their zeal and strength against those who attempt their amendment. And from motives of ambition, selfishness, and a love of power, they will reject and oppose the plainest truths and most important duties and requirements, while non-professors and the outcasts of society who have nothing to restrain or hinder them from embracing right principles, when plainly manifested to be such, will receive and comply with those truths and requirements with all readiness and sincerity.

#### NEW VIEWS.

[We have lately met with a pamphlet written by *William Andrews*, and printed at Auburn, N. Y. 1826, containing some sentiments not exactly in accordance with the doctrines and usages of modern times. We here give a few extracts without adding any comments of our own.]

“ The gospel dispensation does not authorize any man or number of men to make out rules and regulations for faith and doctrines, and choose one or more of their party and invest him or them with ministerial authority, setting them bounds or limits what shall be taught or preached, and when and where. This is a species of idolatrous practice that yet attaches itself to the

christian world. And thus various sects are, in this sense, admiring the work of their own hands.

I believe that a society of christians have no more right to select a man and set him bounds and limits as to doctrine, and appoint him his time and place, and manner of exercise, than the pope of Rome or the king of England have. This is a prerogative I believe that belongs to no man, nor any number of men. And so long as this prerogative is usurped by popes, kings, or societies, sectarianism and error will be established—for what else can we expect? Those that are made ministers by the pope or those in authority under him, are bound to maintain and defend the pope's authority. And those that are made ministers by a king or those in authority under him, are obliged to support the king's authority, and follow the regulations peculiar to that system. So in like manner those that are made ministers or selected for the pulpit by a society, are bound to maintain and defend the doctrine and peculiarities of that society or sect.—Their very appointment demands this of them; and thus it becomes the business and trade of each party to use all their ingenuity and abilities, and borrow from books and writings of others all the arguments and ideas they can suitable to their cause; and thus ingenious men can make falsehood appear like truth.

And those whose situation and connexions in life are such as to lead them to some particular place of worship, have very little chance but to become recipients of the doctrine and peculiarities of that sect, be they what they may, truth or not truth. And if they be in an error, their rules and regulations bind them to perpetuate that error, and is a barrier against truth being brought into them. And thus we see, in country places especially, that in one neighbourhood one sect prevails, and in another neighbourhood another sect

prevails, just as the establishment may happen to be.

And though there is so much religious liberty in this state as to allow us to stay at home or go to what meeting we please, yet when we get into a meeting-house our liberty endeth till we get out again, for the proceedings in most meeting-houses are as despotic and arbitrary, and as inconsistent with the spiritual rights of man, as the political proceedings of a monarchical or despotic kingdom, is inconsistent with the natural rights of man.

The apostle Paul gives directions how a religious meeting should be conducted where he saith, “ Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.” 1st Cor. xiv. 29.

It is very much to be lamented that christian societies professing to believe in the inspiration of the holy spirit, and with such *apostolic* directions as the above in their hands, should still continue to make or adopt rules and regulations by which one is appointed to speak all the time of meeting, and the rest kept in silence, thus practically denying and quenching the operation of that spirit which would lead them into all truth if they would follow its leadings. And representing the christian religion to be a system of rules, regulations, ceremonies, and claims and commandments of men, that must be performed in systematic order, and in this sense bringing the christian religion to be on a level with heathenism and idolatry.

The Quakers are an exception, inasmuch as they do not appoint any to preach or pray at any particular time or place, but assemble themselves together, take their seats, believing it to be their duty to pray or preach or keep silent as their minds may be disposed thereunto by the spirit of Christ. This

is a practical profession that they believe Jesus to be the master of assemblies and in their midst.

But the Quakers are a systematic organized society, and on this account it is a general idea that none ought to speak in their meetings but members of their society. And how far they give countenance to their own members to speak in their public meetings, I know not; but if I might judge from observation, I should conclude there is an understanding amongst them which operates as a restraint to keep some of them silent when they should speak, so that the spiritual rights of christians is but partially allowed.

I do not know what the requisite qualifications for membership amongst the Quakers are, but it is my opinion that they require, as to outward things, a conformity to a particular dress, and a particular language.

As to the mode of dress worn by the Quakers, I believe it is the most proper dress of any that is worn among us, and the most in unison with republican institutions, inasmuch as it be-speaks moderation and equality. But it is generally considered as a sectarian dress, and on this account many people who admire their dress, do not think it prudent to adopt it, lest they should thereby represent themselves as members of their society when they are not.

A sectarian dress should not be observed, for if it be an improvement in dress, it should not be a monopoly of any particular sect; and it can have no useful effect except on a small scale; for if the sect become numerous, the dress becomes popular and fashionable, and then woe unto it, for it becomes one of the false props in religion upon which weak minds will rest.

Organized sectarism should be avoided in religion. The scripture doth not recommend it—the spirit of the gospel is opposed to it. If any thing renders organized sectarism necessary it is outward trouble and persecution. It cannot be useful to the followers of Christ,

as such, except in times of persecution and trouble, or while their number is small—for should any sect become numerous, it becomes fashionable to belong to that sect; and then the words of our Lord will apply, when he saith, “Woe unto you, when all men shall love you and speak well of you.”

Sectarism is founded on arbitrary and despotic principles. The rules and regulations of a society which describe what peculiar doctrines shall be taught, and who shall be allowed to teach in their meetings, are just in unison with the decrees or proclamations of an arbitrary and despotic ruler of a province or empire, that stipulates what religion shall be taught and who shall teach it; and there is as much liberty of conscience in such province or empire, as there is in sectarian religious meetings.

A fixed and stated ministry prevents what it is intended to produce. It is intended to teach people the true and right way, but it stops them short of it, as a body collectively, by making provision for regular outward instruction; the people are brought to lean on an arm of flesh, and if that arm of flesh fails them, they are confounded, as the prophet saith: for if a fixed minister neglects to go and preach where human rules have appointed him, tho' the people have had regular preaching for weeks, and months, and years, yet they act as if the christian religion consisted of forms and ceremonies only; for if the principal performer neglects to meet them, they cannot worship.

This is one of the evils of a fixed ministry; it leadeth the people to expect and depend on outward guides, and outward instructions continually, and keeps them from cultivating an acquaintance with, and waiting for, an inward and spiritual teaching. “My sheep hear my voice and follow me,” saith the great teacher, under the gospel dispensation.

Why should christian societies be at so much expense for outward instruc-

tion, that is in some respects doubtful, when inward and spiritual instruction is so abundantly provided and promised, without money and without price, to all that wait for it? Why do the people pay their money for that which is not bread, and thus hew out to themselves cisterns that can hold no water? But so it is.

A fixed ministry—By a fixed ministry, I mean ministers who are guided by human rules and regulations, respecting where, and when, and what doctrine they shall teach, whether hired or not hired—this I call a fixed ministry; and to speak in general terms, allowing exceptions, a fixed ministry never was nor never will be faithful against the prevailing evils of the times in which they live. The same notions, customs, and fashions that prevail amongst the people, always prevail amongst fixed ministers; and there is no help for it so long as human rules and regulations are the principal guide of ministers respecting where, and when, and what they shall teach.

It is therefore a great error in christians to make rules and regulations, constraining any one to preach at any particular time or place, and restraining any one from preaching whose heart may burn as with a live coal from the altar.

I also believe that ministers who come in the name of Christ, or profess to be influenced by the holy spirit to the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, that such ministers have no right to contract or bargain with any particular society, to preach to them at stated times and places, stated doctrines, either for money or gratuitously, nor submit himself to any man, nor any number of men, respecting where, and when, and what he will preach; he ought to continue in the same, and preserve himself the Lord's freeman; submitting himself to the Lord in all things, and by thus acquainting himself with the Lord, he may grow up into Christ his living head in all things.

I have said that sectarism should be avoided; a great deal might be said in support of this opinion. Partiality, bigotry, and narrowness of spirit are the natural offspring of sectarism. If the members of any religious sect possess generous, friendly, and kind sentiments towards others that are not of their sect, it is the influence of religion on their minds, or popular fashion that produces those feelings; but in the proportion that any sect have lost the power of godliness, while they have retained the form thereof, in the same proportion they have become partial, bigotted, narrow spirited mortals. By a reference to the history of ages that are past volumes might be written in support of this assertion.

Religion itself needeth no sectarism; it is enough that we belong to the household of faith, and to the family of heaven, for the Lord knoweth them that are his."

Some time since we saw an article headed "Calvinism on its last legs," and we think the term "Sectarism on its last legs," would be quite as applicable to the times in which we live; for truly it begins now, for the first time, to be perceived that none of the sects and communities existing in this day, are the true churches of Christ. When this shall become more apparent, as will be the case, all who are truly sincere and would wish to live godly in Christ Jesus, will come out from among them, and be separate from their actions and conduct; and none will remain to be their defenders and supporters but rigid and bigotted Pharisees, whose reign and influence must terminate as the true light of christianity is manifested amongst men.

[From the Rochester (N.Y.) Telegraph.]  
GENEVA COLLEGE.

Before the legislature acts upon the report which gives 30,000 dollars to this institution, some circumstances connected with its history ought to be made public. If we are not strangely misinformed, the faculty of that institution have resorted to means to raise funds which are in the highest degree dishonourable.

About two years since, two clergymen traversed the country holding out the strongest lures to induce the public to patronise the seminary at Geneva. It was represented to parents and guardians that their children could be educated at that institution upon terms altogether more advantageous than were ever before offered. A permanent fund, it was said, was to be created, consisting of promissory notes, the interest only of which was to be collected. A note of 100 dollars, upon which the maker was to pay the *interest* annually, it was solemnly agreed should create a perpetual school fund sufficient for the education of the maker's children.—These inducements, gravely promised by reverend clergymen, succeeded beyond even the sanguine hopes of the projectors of the scheme. Between four and five thousand dollars were raised in this village, and more or less from all the western villages.

Soon after these notes were given, payment of the *principal* instead of the *interest*, was demanded, and suits immediately commenced in cases of non-compliance. And to complete the schemes of duplicity, the school has been discontinued, and the children of persons who paid their 100 dollars have been sent home!

Such instances of deceit and extortion ought never to be practised upon the public with impunity. Above all, let not our high literary institutions be allowed to receive spoils obtained by means which professed adventurers would hesitate to adopt.

#### RELIGION IN FRANCE.

*"Union of Churches."*—Under this head extracts are given in a late paper from a letter of Viscount de Bonald, Peer of France, addressed to the editor of the *Journal des Débats*, in which are the following remarks:

"The Revolution having expelled several of the grievances against which several of the first Reformers raised their voice, such as monastic vows,

wealth of the clergy, and great number of its members, multiplicity of festivals, &c. &c. the Reformers ought, I think, to show less disinclination to return to the religion of the majority of Frenchmen. I know as well as M. Taberaud [supposed to be a Catholic bishop] that the Catholic religion can make no concession of its dogmas, nor would I, in the discipline, make any with which a religious people could be scandalized. I am even persuaded that if the Reformers themselves had returned to the bosom of the common mother, they would feel the influence of her spirit, and be the first to desire the establishment of several institutions which are unfortunately suppressed.

"M. Taberaud very justly considers the great number of remarkable conversions [to the Catholic religion] which have, for some time past, been taking place, as a symptom of approaching union."

This Vicount and Peer of France speaks of "the praiseworthy reunion effected in our own time in Germany between the Lutheran and Calvinistic communions, notwithstanding the formal opposition of their dogmas, and the intractable and reciprocal hatred of their founders and first disciples;" and adds—

"M. Taberaud strenuously denies that there is any political motive for a religious union [in France:] but he will permit me to ask why religion may not accomplish a work which policy has commenced, as under the reign of Constantine policy finished a work commenced by religion, by causing the latter to pass from the family into the state? If policy could bring the parents together, religion ought to unite the children."

It will be seen from the foregoing brief extracts, that the principles of *amalgamation* and union of churches are progressing in Europe.

[A census has been recently taken of the Protestants in France, and it appears that

the whole number is 722,329; of whom 509,848 are Calvinists, and 212,981 are Lutherans. The former are ministered to by 269 pastors, and the latter by 219.]

#### INQUISITION AND THE POPE.

The following is a passage in a note delivered by the Papal Nuncio at Madrid, on the subject of the Inquisition.

"The motives which had induced the Holy See to consent to the re-establishment of the Inquisition no longer existing, this establishment becomes null and without effect; and, besides, his Holiness considering it impolitic, under present circumstances, because the effervescence of the passions, added to human weakness, might sometimes render the tribunal of the Inquisition hurtful in the hands of parties, by turning it aside from the holy and primitive object of that Inquisition, and thus rendering it more odious than profitable."

*Spain and her late Colonies, and the Pope.*

It appears from the late Paris papers that the Pope has transmitted a communication to the Court of Madrid, stating, in substance, that unless the late Spanish Colonies are again speedily reduced to subjection, his Holiness will, in defence of the interests of religion, be compelled to give canonical institution to the Bishops nominated by the new authorities. By the statement of the Etoile, the Pope is represented to have urged "His Catholic Majesty to make effective exertions to bring back his colonies under his dominion." Some of the other papers contain an article in the same terms; but the Courier Français gave a different and more probable version of the application, and adds,—"In such an emergency, his Holiness announces that he shall shortly be under the necessity, for the good of the faithful, and the interests of the Catholic Apostolic Roman Church, to recognize the Bishops chosen by the dissident governments, and to give them canonical institution."

[Star.]

#### PERSECUTION IN SWITZERLAND.

We noticed some time since, the persecution carried on in Switzerland by the orthodox or Established Church. From an article in the Edinburgh Review, it appears, that those who have been persecuted and banished the country, have thus suffered, only for "making what all Christians profess to follow as the rule of life, indeed the rule of all their actions."

These suffering people seem not desirous to form any new sect, but to lead upright lives; and their numbers are said to be greatly on the increase. In speaking of this persecution, the Edinburgh Review says:

"We advisedly state, that the free and tolerant Swiss have made a law against religious liberty, in its principles as persecuting, and in its operation almost as harsh, except that it sheds no blood, as any under which the Roman or Spanish Inquisition have acted, and that this law has gone far beyond the edicts of those famous tribunals in the absurdity of its structure."

#### NEW CATECHISM FOR CHILDREN.

In a Catechism for children, published by Gilbert McMaster, A. M. Pastor of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Duaneburgh, New York, are the following questions and answers.

"*Question.* Has Christ provided a government for his Church?

"*Answer.* Yes; he is the God of order.

"*Q.* What form of Church government is EXCLUSIVELY OF DIVINE AUTHORITY?

"*A.* The PRESBYTERIAN form.

"*Q.* Who are the officers of Christ's appointment in his Church?

"*A.* Ministers, Ruling Elders, and Deacons.

"*Q.* In what judicatories should these officers meet for the transaction of business?

"*A.* In Congregational, Presbyterial, and Synodical judicatories."

#### WILLIAM PENN'S RELIGION.

"We read of the wise king of Israel, that after all his sprightly songs, and pregnant proverbs, and grave discourses, he winds up with a single text,—'Fear God and keep his commandments, for that is the whole duty of man.' Even so, William Penn, after all his deep reading and reflection on that great subject, throws the whole of religion into two words—*Humility and Love.* Those who are in the habit of despising a religion that is not

bundled up and bloated with *creeds* and *catechisms*, *sacraments* and *ceremonies*, will no doubt think as meanly of Penn's simple religion of Humility and Love, as Naaman did of Elisha's simple prescription for the leprosy—'Go AND WASH.' But it is enough for us to know, that this religion, simple as it may seem, is from God. And it is also enough for us to know that the foolishness of God is wiser than man."

[*Weems' Life of Penn.*

*From the Bradford (Pa.) Settler.*

[Copied for the Reformer by a Post Master in Clearfield County, Pa.]

"Some time ago in Armstrong county, a Doctor of Divinity was on his way to preach, when he saw a poor man in the act of dressing a deer. He said nothing to him then, but on coming back he called the man out, said a great deal about the consequence of breaking the Sabbath, and the loss of his soul hereafter, &c. The old woman listening attentively could bear it no longer, and coming to the door said, 'You make a great fuss about that wee [little] bit of meat on Sunday when you get both bread and meat on that day.'

*Bookselling.*—The house of Longman and Co. booksellers, in London, sells five millions of volumes yearly. They employ sixty clerks,—pay 5500*l.* (25,000 dollars) a year for advertisements, and give constant employ to no fewer than 250 printers and bookbinders.

"By Israel's Advocate for Jan." says the Boston Recorder, "we perceive that the American Jews Society have determined to relinquish the Farm at Harrison [West Chester county, N. Y.] at the end of one year from the time in which it was engaged; and have given notice to Col. DAY, the superintendent, that on account of this new arrangement, his services will be no longer required."

[*From the Litchfield (Con.) American Eagle of Feb. 6.*]

The Rev. Dr. Beecher, on the last Sabbath, announced to his church and congregation, that he was about to leave them and take up his abode in Boston. He goes to Boston, it is said, on a salary of two thousand dollars a year, besides trimmings.

*New York Legislature*—The bill brought before the Legislature of New York, by Mr. Beardsley, to prevent the sale on execution, of churches and lots belonging to

incorporated religious societies, has been rejected in the Assembly on a vote of 44 to 30. It is singular that a bill should be presented to exempt "*religious societies*" from paying their just debts, (for this is the amount of it) and no less singular that so many could be found to vote in favour of it.

*Spain.*—A late paper states, the Duke del Infantado, the new minister in Spain, has proposed to raise ways and means by imposing a tax of twenty millions of reals on the clergy.

#### *Creeds and Confessions.*

"It may be proper here to note," says history, "that in the time of Constantine the Great, who gave rich livings to the clergy, the bishops met together in Synods, and composed creeds, which they sought to impose on the people; but, as they were no more than human compositions, many of the clergy refused to subscribe to them. This created much dissension, and many *heresies* (i. e. *differences of opinion*) sprung up in consequence.—Soon afterwards they began to look to the civil power; but no one made sanguinary laws against heretics before the Emperor Justinian, about the middle of the sixth century."

[*From the Christian Baptist.*]

"We are happy to find that, in spite of the reigning doctors of traditions, the people are gradually awakening to a sense of their religious rights and privileges.—We find a large majority of most religious communities are quite unsettled in their views of religious principles and practices. They have lost the greater part of that confidence of being the most reformed Christians, and the wisest in the world, which was the characteristic of every sect, some quarter of a century agone. Many who thought their church almost infallible, now readily admit that she not only *may*, but that she actually *does*, frequently err. And there is a spirit of inquiry marching forth, before which, most assuredly, the rotten systems of tradition and error must and will fall."

[*From the same.*]

"This is a time of religious and political earthquakes. The religious communities of the new world, and the political states of the old world, are in circumstances essentially the same. A great political earthquake threatens to bury in its ruins tyrants and their systems of oppression.

The ecclesiastical systems of the clergy appear destined to a similar fate." "All sects, new and old, seem like a reed shaken by the wind."

#### STATE OF THE CHURCHES IN PHILADELPHIA.

After much strife and contention, and the excommunication of about forty members, including the five senior deacons, the Second Street Baptist Church in this city have finally agreed to employ William T. Brantley, of Augusta, Georgia, to be their Pastor, with a salary of two thousand six hundred dollars per annum. Sixteen hundred dollars of this sum he is to have for preaching, and the remaining one thousand dollars is guaranteed to him from a school. This is perhaps the largest salary received by any Baptist preacher in the United States; and it sufficiently shows that the Gospel has become an article of merchandise amongst the Baptists as well as among Presbyterians and Episcopalians.

Great advancements are made in this day, not in piety but in high salaries to preachers. Indeed, to undertake to get to heaven by the modern fashionable way of belonging to some sect, and paying a priest, is quite an expensive business; and after all it must fail to bring those there who place their dependance on it.

The Presbyterian congregation in Thirteenth Street have renounced the power and jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Sanhedrim, and now stand in the same relation to that body as Mr. Duncan's congregation at Baltimore, and Mr. M'Lean's at Gettysburg. A mandate was issued by the Synod of the Presbyterian Church, and delivered by two clergymen to Mr. Chambers, the Pastor at Thirteenth Street, ordering him to suspend his preaching and care of that church. But the congregation rebelled against the authority of the Synod, and determined to retain Mr. Chambers for their minister, and so the higher powers in the Presbyterian church are left to ruminate on the refractory spirit of their subjects, and see them withdraw from under their standard. This congregation, like that at Baltimore and Gettysburg, reject all human creeds and confessions, considering the Bible a more certain and superior guide to faith and practice. We understand forty new members were added to this congregation at their last communion, and thirty on a similar occasion preceding it.

There appears also to be rather a shaking among the "dry bones" in the Pro-

testant Episcopal Church in this city; and two Episcopal publications, with conflicting views and interests, are now issued in this place of *once* brotherly love, but *now* religious strife and contention. By the bye, the warm contention in the Friends' Society of this city is by no means abated. The rulers of the synagogues seem disposed to carry matters with a high hand, and cast out all those who are not sound in the faith, or that withstand their authority; and these on the other hand, are not willing to submit to their dictation, and be thrown over the wall, while they are equally as good, and think they have as much reason and scripture for their faith as those who have proscribed them. How matters will end, time must determine. So far as these struggles tend to bring down spiritual tyranny and arbitrary rule, and restrain arrogant assumptions over the rights and consciences of others, the true christian will rejoice in them. For freedom from all restraint in doing good, and in the exercise of opinion and judgment in matters pertaining to religion, is the privilege of all—and especially of those whom Christ has made *free*, and who have taken Him for their guide and teacher.

#### ANOTHER NEW PROJECT.

A Missionary in the western part of the State of New York, proposes, in a late number of the *Boston Recorder*, the formation of a "Benevolent Society," to loan money to assist newly settled towns in erecting "houses of worship." Payment afterwards to be made by the sale of "slips," or pews, "at 30 or 50 dollars each;" and also a salary raised of 600 dollars per annum, for a preacher, by an average rent of 6 dollars each. "Let 100,000 dollars," says he, "be thus employed, and 100 churches might be erected in a year." Signed "D. M. Smith."

It is stated in a late number of the *Boston Recorder*, by the editors of that paper, that "ten years are occupied in obtaining a regular education for the ministry." On this statement we offer no comments.

\* \* \* The communication signed "B." will appear in our next.

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